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Artist Statement

For the building block assignment, I choose to focus on the facet of our class as they relate to video chatting. Facets I choose to incorporate into my project were the medium and the message, remediation, convergence, immediacy, hypermediacy, deskilling and autoamputation. Each facet explains technologies influence on society and human association. The medium is the message. A phrase coined by Marshall McLuhan explaining we place more importance on the medium then we do on the message.

In the book Understanding Media, McLuhan states mediums have more on an impact on our society than the information we are sharing (McLuhan 7). McLuhan states the message is change. “for the "message" of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.” It changes our ability to do work, the speed work is completed patterns we adapt. Change of scale, pace and pattern refer to the way technologies change human association. McLuhan goes on to say, any medium is an extension of ourselves (7). For example, video chatting is an extension of human communication. However, McLuhan states we should aware of our mediums and the effects of the extensions (McLuhan 4). He questions if extensions are a “good thing” (McLuhan 4). Extensions are good, however with every extension comes some form of amputation. This theory relates to autoamputation.

Auto-amputation is the result of a numbness created by an extension. This numbness effects individual and society (McLuhan 6). The struggle to find balance with technology leads to an amputation (McLuhan 42). De-skilling can be viewed in the same light. Deskilling is a result of technology. In the article “The deskilling of information literacy”, Brabazon states the efficiency, productivity and connectivity technology delivers has caused certain functions of our lives to become automated (Brabazon 13). It has shifted our “patterns of conscious decision making” (Brabazon 13). Thus, contributing to the moving through life in a bubble of predictability (Brabazon 13). Deskilling is the shift the labor. Digital clocks shift the labor of telling time. They have deskilled the ability to read an analog clock. New technologies have made it easier to do work while deskilling individuals.

Convergence refers to the mingling and mixing of media forms in and through cultural forms like, social, cultural, economic, political, and technological (Woiwor 2). In the book *Convergence Culture*, author Henry Jenkins states, the key to convergence is the mixture of old and new. As stated in my New Skill paper, Jenkins explains that those on the path of convergence will shape the future of our culture (Woiwor 2). In the social and political form convergence can involve social media. On a social level, social media mixes communication and human interaction with social networking services. Users can like, message and comment on each other’s post. Twitter facilitates an open dialogue among people worldwide. On the political level, politicians use social media networking services to connect with the younger voter, promote their campaigns and keep up to date. Breaking news is broadcasted on social networking services; informing users about what is going on around the world.

Convergence in our culture is everywhere. The old and new mixing shapes our culture. For example, owning a cell phone was not important in the 70s and 80s but now it is. Cell

phones have many valuable functions that society uses today. We make list on our phones, set appointments, save phone numbers, take pictures, etc. Having a phone is a part of our culture now because we use it daily. Convergence through economic and technology benefit from one another. New smartphones, watches, computers are released every year, they are improvements of older models. They were made to fit the needs of today's society using the old as a blueprint. As society grows, so does the economy. New jobs have been created, markets have changed, and technology has grown but the old is still around. Old practices, like the wage gap between men and women, is still present. Women have joined the workforce, climbed the ladder, become CEOs, yet the wage gap is still around. Convergence can be seen in economics through the wage gap and the advancement of women in the workforce.

Remediation is a new medium fashioning its predecessors and other contemporary media according to Bolter and Grusin (19). New technologies build upon old techniques, using old technologies as a blueprint for the new. Retrograde remediation refers to the old refashioning itself to fit the new. Old technologies will reinvent themselves to fit the needs of today's consumer and society. New features are added to enhance the experience. In the book *Remediation: Understanding New Media* by Jay David Bolter & Richard Grusin, the authors state that "each medium promises to reform its predecessors by offering a more immediate or authentic experience, the promise of reform inevitably leads us to become aware of the new medium as a medium (19). This refers to immediacy and hypermediacy. Immediacy and hypermediacy relate to remediation. Bolter and Grusin explain that immediacy leads to hypermediacy (Grusin & Bolter 34). Immediacy is a sense of urgency; it offers a more immediate or authentic experience. New technology mimics reality and giving users an authentic experience and tangible artifacts (Bolter & Grusin 19). Users become aware that a new medium

is a medium through hypermediacy (Bolter & Grusin 19). Bolter & Grusin state that hypermediacy acknowledges multiple acts of representation and makes them visible (33-34). We become aware of the medium when it fails. Static over phone calls and buffering on streaming services reveal we are using a medium through hypermediacy.

I choose these themes for my project because they related to video chatting. Video chatting is a form of technology I use daily. Being an out-of-state student, I am always away from home. Staying connected with my friends and family is necessary, but most importantly seeing their faces is necessary. Video chatting is an extension of human communication. Video chatting changes the scale by, saving time, energy and money. Instead of traveling to see family members far away, users can video chat with them instead. It changes pace by lessening the response time and increasing urgency. Video chatting is used for many reasons, like sharing urgent news and finalizing plans, which require fast responses. It changes the pattern of communicating with one another, the way we check on people, visiting, one another, holidays, staff meetings, interviews and deliver information. Video chatting has allowed users to do more with being in one place. Video chatting increases mobility without being mobile.

Video chatting remediates old forms of communications. It remediates face to face communication. Users can communicate face to face without being in the same space. It renders in-person sit downs obsolete. However, the obsolete gains something in return. Face to face communication still happens, in a different form. Old forms of video chatting will refashion itself to fit the new. Video chatting has refashioned itself from group video chats to one on one. Older video chatting services like Tynychat and ooVoo were group oriented. Video chatting services like Skype and FaceTime moved to one-on-one chats. Those services soon refashioned

themselves to fit the consumers' needs for group video chatting. Apple released group FaceTime on the iOS 12.2 update for iPhone users (Sarkar).

I choose to focus on convergence through the cultural, social and technological forms for my building block project because video chatting can be seen clearly through those three forms. Video chatting has become a part of our culture, mainly because of our phones. Streets, campus and coffee houses are filled with users' video chatting. It is seen often and has become the norm. Video chatting is used to connect with family members and friends in cities far and wide. Video chatting is a technology of our culture, we love being in contact with one other wherever we are. Video chatting facilitates social interaction and has become very popular on social networking sites. Facebook and Instagram have implemented video chatting on their social networking services. People meet online and video chat before meeting in person. Technology builds off old technology. Convergence through political and economics can be seen in business meetings and money made because of this technology.

Immediacy through video chatting allows for quick response, immediate face to face connection and the reading of emotions. Bolter and Grusin explain that "immediacy is apparent in claims that digital images are more exciting, lively, and realistic than mere text on a computer screen and that a videoconference will lead to more effective communication than a telephone call (23)". Video chatting gives users a feeling of being there. Hypermediacy through buffering, freezing, connection failure, lag, and poor quality makes users aware of the medium. Video chatting amputates our focus & memory. While video chatting, users are not focused on one activity, they are trying to juggle a thousand things at once. Deskilling is the loss of certain skills caused by efficiency. Video Chatting deskills writing skills and the ability to read emotions.

My plan for this project was to create a PowerPoint and include a physical component of the project. The algorithmic created for this project was not followed. I took a more creative approach to complete my project. I made a connection between video chatting and the themes of our class while shedding light on an important technology in society. Everything did not go according to plan. I planned to demonstrate video chatting in front of the class, but all my friends have class or work during the time period. I had to revise the video chatting demo from my plan. I included a clip from a television show demonstrating video chatting in my PowerPoint. I wanted to play the Meme game with the cards I made for my presentation, but the presentation time limit prevented it. The memes were based on different scenarios that happen when video chatting. I had different scenarios related to the themes I choose for my project.

One of my classmates asked, "what video chatting service I preferred to use"; I responded with FaceTime. Like many of my classmates, FaceTime is my go-to service because of my phone. I used, Tinchat, ooVoo, and Skype before, but I'm accustomed to FaceTime because I am an apple user. I referred to Skype as being for "old businessman" because Skype is boring to me. Skype is more of a professional video chatting service then one for leisure. In my opinion, Skype is too formal for everyday video chatting. FaceTime is more convenient since it's already on my phone. I wanted to use Skype, I would have to download the app or install it on my computer. I like the immediacy of FaceTime compared to Skype.

I was aware of everything discussed in class, but I did not know it until I took this class. The concepts explain how technology has shaped our society. Many of us are unaware of these concepts. We go through life oblivious to technologies influence on society. We are unaware of these concepts because of saturation. We have become saturated with technology and never

noticed the major changes it has caused. McLuhan questions when we will stop consuming as if we are smart devices. The answer is never. The growth and demand for technology will never allow us to stop consuming like smart devices. We have to keep up with new information and technologies produced. One day society will become oversaturated, but that day is not anytime soon.

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